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GREAT SIGNIFICANCE OF FACTORY-OPERATED SPARE-TIME SCHOOLS IN
COMMUNIST CHINA
by T'ao Lu-chia

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U. S. JOINT PUBLICATIONS RESEARCH SERVICE
205 EAST 42nd STREET, SUITE 300
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

FOREWORD

This publication was prepared under contract by the UNITED STATES JOINT PUBLICATIONS RESEARCH SERVICE, a federal government organization established to service the translation and research needs of the various government departments.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
SEPTEMBER 1954
14-00000-1

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GREAT SIGNIFICANCE OF FACTORY-OPERATED SPARE-TIME SCHOOLS IN
COMMUNIST CHINA

Following is a translation of an article by T'ao Lu-chia
in the Chinese-Language newspaper 'Kung-jen Jih-pao'
(Workers' Daily), Peiping, 31 May 1960, page 3.

Editor's note: Nurturing the manpower of socialist construction in a much, fast, good, and economical manner is the main mission of workers' spare-time education. The progressive, collectivist Chin-hsi Machinery Factory of T'ai-yuan city, Shensi Province, represented at the current all-China conference of cultural and educational heroes, has just trained its first group of college-graduate technicians by spare-time education. We invited T'ao Lu-chia, First Secretary of the Shansi Provincial Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, to write an article for the consideration of the education workers of factories and mines everywhere.

Can our factories, mines, and enterprises operate spare-time schools and half-work half-study schools and can the spare-time schools and half-work half-study schools train working class intellectuals at high speed and with good quality? This is the pressing question presented to us by the high-speed development of our country's socialist construction.

Factory-operated schools are by no means a new thing to us. Many factories, mines, and enterprises since the liberation have provided full-time primary schools for children of workers, spare-time literacy schools for workers, spare-time primary schools for workers, full-time or half-work half-study industrial schools and secondary technical schools, etc. But, the concept of factory-operated schools has developed from the narrow, old concept with many limitations to the new concept where factories are also schools, and at the same time that factories are producing material goods, they also must nurture the new Communist man; this is a product of the big leap forward of 1958. Since that time, with two years of practical evidence, these factories, mines, and enterprises can not only operate spare-time primary schools and spare-time or half-work half-study secondary schools, but also can operate spare-time or half-work half-study schools of higher learning. Moreover, a

portion of the large scale factories, mines, and enterprises have established a full time educational system from primary school through college. The successful experiences of T'ai-yuan's Chin-hsi Machinery Factory and of many other progressive factories, mines, and enterprises prove that spare-time schools and half-work half-study schools, from low level to high level and operated by factories, mines, and enterprises, can train working class intellectuals with high speed and with good quality. From this it can be seen that operation of schools by factories has already advanced to a new stage of development. It can also be said that it has become an important element in the cultural revolution campaign currently in progress in our country. It is very evident that operation of various kinds of schools by the factories, mines, and enterprises suits the natural trend of the high-speed development of socialist construction in our country.

Do the leadership cadre of the factories, mines, and enterprises have a correct knowledge of the natural trend of factories for operating schools? No. We need only to conscientiously make some comparisons and analyses to see that the actual situation is this: the majority of leadership cadre display great enthusiasm and progressive policies so the results are great; a small portion of the leadership cadre are sometimes warm and sometimes cold, so the results are not large; and there also are a few leadership cadre who have not even placed the matter on their agendas yet. Obviously it cannot be said of the latter two types that they have a correct knowledge of this important matter of factories operating schools. They still harbor the attitude of sceptics of neo-sceptics. According to their views, factories can operate schools only in a small way, not in a big way. What is their reasoning? Undoubtedly it is that operating schools in a big way will impede production, that teachers are lacking for operating schools, and that teaching materials are lacking for operating schools, so their conclusion is that progress will be slow and quality low (the gain will not make up for the loss), etc. In short, confronting them is a heap of insoluble difficulties. Actually, it is only necessary to look at the living reality of the Chin-hsi Machinery Factory to see that their pessimistic sentiment fully reflects the lazy, cowardly viewpoint.

The Chin-hsi Machinery Factory started operating spare-time schools in a big way in 1956. In the mere 3-4 years up to the present a leaping change has occurred in the culture and spirit of all the workers of the factory. Now this factory truly has become a factory which also is a school. About 90% of its workers are studying the various levels and kinds of schools. The various kinds of schools are: spare-time primary schools, secondary schools, and colleges; half-work half-study secondary technical schools and

industrial institutes. Also there is a full-time secondary technical school. Up to the present, 306 workers have graduated from the spare-time lower secondary school, 137 from the spare-time upper secondary school and the half-work half-study secondary technical school. There are 54 graduates of the spare-time and half-work half-study college (equal to 74% of the total number of graduates of colleges and special schools assigned to this factory by the nation during the past ten years). Among the workers of the factory there are no illiterates, the primary school graduates have increased from 32% of the workers before 1956 to 42%, graduates of lower secondary and upper secondary schools from 41% before 1956 to 50%, and college graduates rose from 2% to 8%. Moreover, about 90% of the factory's workers organized 480 small study groups to study the works of Mao Tse-tung; also a theoretical lecture group was set up with over 400 workers participating. It can be seen that they not only emphasized heavily the cultural and technical studies, but at the same time also place great weight on the study of political theory. What is especially stimulating is the fact that the industrial institute set up by this factory in 1958 turned out its first group of graduates totaling 43 persons during May of this year. Aside from 12 technicians with a commensurate cultural level, all the remaining persons were production workers. Of these, ten persons (all older workers with more than ten years of experience in industry) were completely illiterate before 1953. After about six years of spare-time schooling, these ten basically attained the cultural level of upper secondary school graduates, and after studying at the industrial institute one year and eight months on a half-work half-study basis and the last three months freed from work -- that is, half of the time period of full-time college -- they attained a standard equally as good as that of full-time college graduates. There was not the slightest bit of inferiority in their graduation essays and graduate plans as compared to those of the full-time college graduates. Moreover their ability to solve production problems involving science and technology far surpasses that of ordinary college students. The example set by these ten older workers is a great inspiration for the remaining workers who are illiterate, semi-illiterate, and whose cultural level is not too high. People will naturally ask, since these workers were able to climb the peak to scientific and cultural knowledge as quickly as this, why can't others in similar circumstances or even better circumstances do this? At the same time the example of these ten older workers is a great inspiration to the cadre of the factories, mines, and enterprises. Because of them it is acknowledged that gradually making higher education universal in factories, mines, and enterprises is by no means the mystery it seems to simple persons, nor is it unattainable. At present, in the spare-time college and half-work half-study college set up at

Chin-hsi Machinery Factory, there are ten courses of study in machinery, metallurgy, electric equipment, arithmetic, physics, language, medicine, pharmacy, Russian, and business management, with a total of more than 800 students. And they have set up a plan whereby beginning with the last half of this year they will strive to universalize the lower secondary school educational level in one year, to universalize upper secondary educational level in three years, and college educational level in seven years. This means that by 1966, over 80% of the present workers will be in college or will have graduated from college. We can foresee that their plan is capable of fulfillment, and by no means is baseless, wishful thinking.

All the facts above plainly knock out the fallacious reasoning of the sceptics and neo-sceptics that if factories operate schools, the progress will be slow and the quality low.

Must the operation of schools by factories actually impede production? The evidence of the Chin-hsi Machinery Factory indicates just the contrary. Operation of schools by factories does not impede production, but greatly expedites production. During the 30 successive months since November 1957, the full-capacity production month after month and quarter after quarter shows clearly that they have merged the surge of the cultural revolution with the surge of technical innovations and technical revolution into one great mainstream. So the creations and inventions of the workers are without end. Not only are there more and more creations and inventions, but also their quality is higher and higher. Using the workers of this graduating class of the industrial college as an example, during the period they were studying, 319 suggestions of technical innovations were submitted and 232 have already been implemented. The implementation of these suggestions increased production efficiency several dozen times, several hundred times, even several thousand times. On the eve of their graduation, they put out eight very valuable graduation plans, and at present five of them have already been carried out. From this it can be seen that when the scientific and cultural level of the working masses is broadened and elevated they will take on the wings of the tiger and display supernatural powers in the campaign for technical revolution and thereby will unceasingly bring about ever-increasing labor productivity. How can there be any doubt of this?

Isn't there some way to overcome the lack of teaching materials and lack of teachers in the operation of schools by factories? In the matter of teaching materials and teachers, the condition of the Chin-hsi Machinery Factory is no better than that of other factories. In the course of operating schools, they definitely

ran into these difficulties. Of course, they did not bow to these difficulties, but adopted a brave, revolutionary spirit, and conquered these difficulties one by one and step by step. While reforming the education system, curricula, teaching materials, and teaching methods, they encountered opposition from those who have the educational outlook of the bourgeoisie. Those few persons spread various fallacious reasonings, such as "Spare-time schools and half-work half-study schools must be run as the ordinary full-time schools are run in order to be considered regular," "Textbooks are written by authorities and must not be changed", "The teaching principle is law, it is sacred and must not be transgressed," etc. In short, they put on the appearance of "experts" to scare people. They do not dare to take a step away from the education system, curricula, teaching materials and teaching methods divorced from practicality and divorced from production which are bequeathed by the bourgeoisie. The industrial masses have criticized this bourgeois viewpoint sharply. The masses say: "If spare-time schools followed the traditional pattern, adults would study children's books, and the curricula would be excessive, progress slow and useless, and study would never be completed." The Chin-hsi Machinery Factory relied on the struggle between the two roads of much, fast, good, economical and little, slow, poor, and expensive, which was initiated by the industrial masses. As for the educational system, curricula, teaching materials, and teaching methods, they adopted the spirit of unceasing revolution and the work method of the mass line in accordance with the necessity for factory-operated schools to match production, to relate to reality, and to suite the characteristics of adults; they bravely undertook all kinds of attempts at reform. After this kind of brave attempt, they began to find the correct road of much, fast, good, and economical. Of course in practice this road requires continuous inspection. But, at present the set of education reform measures which they have adopted have already obtained excellent results. Solid evidence will finally get an acknowledgement of defeat from those who speak of little, slow, poor, and expensive. In solving the problem of shortage of teachers, they similarly have adopted a revolutionary method. This is to give weight to fostering and selecting teachers from among the laborers, aside from selecting a group of able specialists from the factory technicians for teaching and engaging others from within and outside the factory to work and teach. At present the number of laborers who also have teaching responsibilities has reached more than 160; 45% of the total number of persons who are combining work with teaching. They have been received enthusiastically by the students. The first laborer-teacher to take the podium, a fifth class electrician, enjoyed the unanimous praise of the students when he explained the principle of electrical current induction and transformers in

the physics class, because he has a measure of culture, a wealth of practical knowledge, and also a familiarity with the minds and questions of the workers. In the past, when many teachers from among the intellectuals explained these principles, the students expended much care and thought but the ideas did not get through. From this it can be seen that since teachers can be drawn from the laboring masses the difficulties of the teacher shortage can be solved easily. Of course, those with the bourgeois outlook will not believe this point. Nevertheless, the facts at the Chin-hsi Machinery Factory are thus.

It should be pointed out that the trouble with sceptics and neo-sceptics in regard to the matter of factory-operated schools lies in the fact that they don't understand the great significance of factory-operated schools and the need for implementing educational reforms. What is the great significance, after all? The points presented below are the essentials in accordance with what has been stated above:

First it is the basis for hastening the forward development of the high-speed, high-quality campaign for technical revolutions; therefore it is an essential condition for guaranteeing the continuing big leap forward of socialist construction. Socialist factories, mines, and enterprises should not only produce material goods, but what is more important, must strive to nurture a new communist man. The quality of the man produced will directly affect and determine the material products. Therefore, only by universally and unceasingly raising people's communist awareness and scientific and cultural level, can we realize successive big leaps forward in production during the long period of transition from socialism to communism.

Second, the factories, mines, and enterprises are the best places for thoroughly implementing the policy put forth by the party's central committee to make education serve the politics of the proletariat and to combine education with productive labor. If only all the factories, mines, enterprises and all the people's communes of cities and countries will operate schools and incessantly and correctly carry out education reforms, then the scientific and cultural levels and the level of Marxist-Leninist theory among the vast masses of industrial and agricultural workers will leap forward. We then also can greatly, quickly, well, and economically accomplish one of the main missions of the cultural revolution indicated by the party's central committee, namely, establish a large corps of working class intellectuals including a technical cadre corps (this is the most numerous), professors, instructors, scientists, newsmen, literate, artists, and a corps of Marxist theorists.

Third, the decisions of the party's central committee concerning the establishment of people's communes in agricultural villages pointed out that greatly raising the communist ideological awareness and moral fiber of the people, popularizing and elevating the people's education, and dispelling the distinction between mental labor and physical labor are what produce the fundamental conditions for the transition from socialism to communism. In accomplishing these objectives, it is very clear that reliance on the state-operated full-time schools is far from sufficient. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out the policy of running state schools along with the schools of factories, mines, and enterprises, and to run full-time schools along with half-work half-study schools, and this is the policy of walking on two legs. It should be seen that spare-time schooling has a great future; following the rise in industrial and agricultural production techniques, and following the development of industrial and agricultural production, the work period will be shortened and at this time there will be no difference between spare-time schools and half-work half-study schools. The vigorous and extensive education offered by the development of spare-time schools and half-work half-study schools elevated the role of the political ideological level of the vast working masses; this is what the state-operated full-time schools cannot begin to do. It is very evident that if our educational field did not have this leg, we would be forced to admit that raising the communist ideological awareness and moral fiber of the people, popularizing and elevating the people's education, dispelling the distinction between mental labor and physical labor, that is to say the transition into the communist age, would be impossible. Naturally, in order to dispell the distinction between physical labor and mental labor gradually it is also necessary to carry out the policy in full-time schools of operating industry and farms with a stipulated period during which the students will go to the people's communes, factories, mines, and enterprises to participate in physical labor. This policy is already being implemented everywhere and the results obtained are becoming more and more apparent.

From the above it can be realized that in being a warrior for Marxism-Leninism, if one does not see the great significance of the above, if one does not see that the operation of schools by factories, mines, enterprises, and people's communes is a great affair of the party and the people, if we do not rely on all the party and all the people to operate various kinds of schools but instead place this burden on a few organizations, if we do not unceasingly and correctly carry out the educational reforms in accordance with the policy of much, fast, good, and economical, then we will inevitably commit the error of right opportunism.

Over 110 years ago Marx and Engels pointed out in the "Communist Manifesto" the great theory of "combining education with material production." At the end of the last century Lenin wrote: "If the youth do not unite education with productive labor, the ideal of the future society will not be realized; if teaching and education is divorced from productive labor or productive labor is not carried out simultaneously with teaching and education, the height required by the level of modern technology will not be reached. Aren't we, right now, putting this great ideal of Marx, Engels, and Lenin into effect a thousand li per day under the glorious brilliance of Mao Tse-tung's ideology, and making it a vital, living, actuality?"

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